

WYOMING LENDER ALERT

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U.S. Small Business Administration

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Your Small Business Resource

Do Your Homework to Land a Government Contract

For many small businesses, the process of trying to obtain a government contract is fraught with fears of red tape and endless reporting requirements. Yes, the process can be challenging, but doing work for the government doesn't have to be difficult. You have to work through multiple steps with a certain amount of commitment, but eventually it will all come together. It's also important to build partnerships with other small businesses which have previous contracting experience.

So, let's break this 'maze' down in a way that makes sense and is doable.

First, educate yourself. Don't jump into doing business with the government without first knowing how the playing field works. You can begin by attending a Wyoming Procurement Technical Assistance Center or Small Business Development Center government contracting workshop. Listen to the experts explain the nuts and bolts and then focus your private questions during scheduled one-on-one counseling sessions. These services are offered free or at a

nominal cost. You can also obtain online training at:

www.sba.gov/training. If possible, invite an employee or two to also participate. You can mutually share ideas and decide how best to map out a government contracting strategy.

Second, once you have the basics down, do some preliminary research to determine what the federal government is buying. You need to match your products and/or services with current government purchasing demand. Remember, the government is huge and each department and agency has different needs. Products can vary from super high tech gadgets to ranch hay, and services are just as wide ranging and include installing aerospace technologies to clearing forest trails. The sky is the limit, so invest some time learning what's really out there.

How? The best source is Federal Business Opportunities www.fbo.gov.

This site lists all active government purchasing opportunities and the searches can be narrowed by agency and product or service. Currently over 36,000 solici-

tations were listed. Browse the site to get a feel for who is buying what and to gather other information designed to help you navigate government contracting.

For many contracts, if you qualify for a specific NAIC or SIC code, then the bidding process is narrowed in your favor. For example, in order to qualify for the HUBZone program, your business must be located in an area designated as a Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) Zone. HubZones are located in many rural areas across the country. The SBA website is an excellent source for gaining details about how to qualify for various contract set-aside certifications go to: www.sba.gov then link to contracting. Many contracts contain set-aside clauses for Women Owned Business, disabled veterans, 8(a), and HUBZone.

Third, register with Central Contractor Registration www.bpn.gov/CCR. This official, FREE on-line registrant database collects, validates, stores and disseminates data in support of agency acquisition and award missions. You don't need to pay to register in CCR. Use simple, understandable language

when writing your profile. Remember, while working with CCR and other websites, feel free to contact an SBDC or Wyoming PTAC counselor with any questions.

Included in the CCR is the Dynamic Small Business Search. Once you have saved your CCR profile, click on the SBA link to ensure that your business information is accessed by SBA Procurement Center Representatives and agency contracting officers (the individuals that decide who is awarded a contract).

Fourth, review the Federal Acquisition Regulations or FAR. At over 1,000 pages, it can be intimidating. However, you only need to know the sections that impact your business relationship with the government. For most small businesses, this is section 19. Just like you

don't need to know all of the tax code to complete your 1040 or 1120, you can leave most of the FAR on the bookshelf.

Fifth, prepare a bid in response to a government solicitation for a service or a product. As mentioned above www.fbo.gov lists almost all government solicitations. The content of each solicitation may vary. They often include a synopsis of the requested product or service, specification details, capabilities, wage rates, experience, deadlines, etc. It's important to review various solicitations from different agencies to get a good feel for your best fit.

Also, know that there are many individuals working for different government agencies dedicated to ensuring that a significant amount of gov-

ernment contracting is set-aside for small business. They are your advocates. SBA currently estimates this amount to be over \$120 billion annually.

For a complete list of contracting resources, contact Jose Martinez at the SBA Colorado District Office at:

(303) 844-2607, or Jose.Martinez@sba.gov. He will provide you with a free marketing directory, including contact information for SBA government contracting personnel, federal agency Small Business Specialists, and prime contractor representatives.

In Wyoming, contact Jeff Sneddon, PTAC Procurement Specialist; Phone: 307-234-3203; Email:

jsneddon@uwyo.edu.

By: Dan Hannaher

Social Media

Connect with the U.S. Small Business Administration on Facebook, Twitter and Youtube.



Construction Contracting

The U.S. Small Business Administration in conjunction with the Wyoming Entrepreneur: Small Business Development Center, Procurement Technical Assistance Center and Stover & Associates, Inc. present a FREE one day workshop focusing on Construction Contracting for small businesses. The day is packed with information that is critical to successfully negotiating bidding and managing construction contracts with the Federal Government.

Topics Include:

- Proposal Preparation;
- Bid Process;

- Pre-construction Survey, Davis Bacon;
- Project Management;
- Budgeting, Planning, Performance;
- Hiring and Maintaining a Qualified Workforce, EEOC and more!

This workshop is designed to meet the needs of small business people that want to gather as much information as possible in the shortest amount of time, then get back to work.

REGISTRATION REQUIRED – REGISTER TODAY: register online at <http://sbaworkshops.stoverteam>.

[com](#), or call Margie Rowell, SBDC 307-857-1174, or Deb Farris, SBA 307-261-6510.

WHEN: Tuesday September 13, 2011
 WHERE: Frank B. Wise Business Plaza Conference Room 3, Ethete Rd.
 Fort Washakie, Wyoming
 TIME: 8:30am – 5:00pm

Sierra Trading Post Selected for 'SBA 100'

SBA 100 highlights top businesses that are growing and creating jobs with SBA assistance

Sierra Trading Post, located in Cheyenne, Wyoming, was recently designated as an 'SBA 100' company. 'SBA 100' features one hundred businesses that have created at least 100 jobs since receiving SBA assistance.

Sierra Trading Post was founded by Keith Richardson in June 1986. The company purchases name brand products from overstocks and closeouts, passing savings on to its customers. Sierra Trading Post started with a staff of sixty-five and now employs more than 700 people. In the 1990s, it received two SBA loans to help purchase land, construct a building, obtain equipment, and expand a storage facility.

"Sierra Trading Post represents the best in American business practices," said Dan Hannaher, SBA Regional Administrator. "By effectively investing its initial financing, the company has grown to become a premier job producer in the state of Wyoming."

The 'SBA 100' companies include businesses in a variety of industries, from manufacturing, to food and beverage, to shipping. Each business received SBA support in the form of capital, contracting, counseling or investment before going on to create at least 100 jobs.

Descriptions and a photograph gallery of each of the 'SBA 100' companies

can be found at www.sba.gov/100.

The SBA provides small businesses with the tools and resources they need to grow and create jobs. The 'SBA 100' is a cross-section of the diverse array of businesses that stand to benefit from SBA assistance. With the help of SBA, the 'SBA 100' companies have succeeded and created thousands of jobs across America.

For more information about SBA's programs for small businesses, call 307-261-6500 or TDY 307-261-6527 or visit the SBA's extensive website at:

www.sba.gov/wy.



307 261-6505

Calendar

Sept 1 Women's Roundtable Laramie/Jackson;	Sept 14 Business Roundtable Rawling;	Sept 30 Women's Expo Casper
Sept 6 Women's Roundtable Newcastle;	Sept 15 Business Roundtable Torrington;	
Sept 7 Women's Roundtable Casper;	Sept 21 Business Roundtable Wheatland;	
Sept 8 Business Roundtable Buffalo;	Sept 27 Business Roundtable Worland;	